

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for delivering patient care, comprising:
establishing a virtual clinic on a network;
establishing a working relationship with at least one physician;
establishing communications with the physicians on the network;
establishing a working relationship with one or more patients;
establishing communications with the patients; and
linking patients to physicians upon initialization of communication between the patient and the virtual clinic on the network.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of linking further comprises:
accessing a web page by the patient that is provided by the virtual clinic;
receiving, by the virtual clinic, information for the patient;
based upon the information provided by the patient, selecting a physician; and
establishing a communications link between the selected physician and the patient.
3. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
receiving a fee statement from the physician by the virtual clinic.

4. The method of claim 3 further comprising:
sending a fee statement to the patient from the virtual clinic.
5. A method for delivering patient care, comprising:
establishing a virtual clinic on a network;
establishing a working relationship with an insurance carrier;
establishing communications with the insurance carrier on the network, the insurance carrier having one or more patients to which the insurance carrier provides benefits;
establishing a working relationship with one or more physicians;
establishing communications with the physicians; and
linking patients to physicians upon initialization of communication between the patient and the insurance carrier.
6. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of linking further comprises:
accessing a web page by the patient that is provided by the insurance carrier;
receiving, by the insurance carrier, information from the patient through the web page;
forwarding the information from the patient to the virtual clinic;
based upon the information provided by the patient, selecting a physician; and
establishing a communications link between the selected physician and the patient.

7. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
receiving a fee statement from the physician by the virtual clinic.
8. The method of claim 7 further comprising:
sending a fee statement to the insurance carrier.
9. A system for establishing communications between physicians and patients comprising:
a network;
at least one physician operative with the network, the physician enabled to receive information from the network to submit responses;
at least one patient operative with the network, the patient enabled to submit information on the network and to receive responses from the network; and
a virtual clinic operative with the wide area network, the virtual clinic constructed and arranged to receive submissions and responses from the network, the virtual clinic further constructed and arranged to select a physician based upon the information provided by the patient and to link communications between the physician and the patient upon the patient submitting the request on the network.
10. The system as in claim 9, wherein the network is a wide area network.
11. The system as in claim 10, wherein the wide area network is the Internet.

12. The system as in claim 9, wherein the patient has access to diagnostic equipment.
13. The system as in claim 9, the system further comprising:
 - a hospital operative with the network, the hospital enabled to receive information from the network to submit responses.
14. The system as in claim 9, wherein the physician submits fee information to the patient.
15. The system as in claim 9, wherein the physician submits fee information to the virtual clinic.
16. A system for establishing communications between physicians and patients comprising:
 - a network;
 - at least one physician operative with the network, the physician enabled to receive information from the network to submit responses;
 - at least one patient operative with the network, the patient enabled to submit information on the network and to receive responses from the network;
 - an insurance carrier operative with the network, the insurance carrier constructed and arranged to receive the request from the patient and forward the request a virtual clinic operative with the wide area network, the virtual clinic constructed and arranged to

receive submissions and responses from the network, the virtual clinic further constructed and arranged to select a physician based upon the information provided by the patient and to link communications between the physician and the patient upon the patient submitting the request on the network.

17. The system as in claim 16, wherein the network is a wide area network.
18. The system as in claim 17, wherein the wide area network is the Internet.
19. The system as in claim 16, wherein the patient has access to diagnostic equipment.
20. The system as in claim 16, the system further comprising:
a hospital operative with the network, the hospital enabled to receive information from the network to submit responses.
21. The system as in claim 16, wherein the physician submits fee information to the patient.
22. The system as in claim 16, wherein the physician submits fee information to the virtual clinic.

23. The system as in claim 22, wherein the virtual clinic submits fee information to the insurance carrier.

24. The system as in claim 17, wherein the physician submits fee information to the insurance carrier.

25. A method for developing a virtual clinic for allowing a patient to remotely contact a physician and receive medical services, comprising:

establishing a virtual clinic having capabilities for:

(a) contacting the virtual clinic by the patient,

(b) collecting information on the patient's medical condition,

(c) identifying at least one physician based on the collected information on patient's medical condition, and

(d) storing and accessing patient medical records;

establishing a working relationship with the least one physician to provide medical services to patients referred via the virtual clinic, the physician providing information relating to qualifications for use during a selection process;

providing diagnostic testing equipment; and

enabling communication between the patient and the physician to transmit data regarding the patients condition, results from the diagnostic equipment, and recommended treatment.

26. The method of claim 25 further comprising:
contracting with at least one insurance company to reimburse the virtual clinic for medical services provided to the patient.
27. The method of claim 25 further comprising:
submitting information relating to medical licenses by the physician; and
comparing a patient's residence with the physician's medical license by the virtual clinic.
28. The method of claim 25 further comprising:
providing patient with access to the diagnostic testing equipment.
29. The method of claim 25, wherein the step of providing diagnostic testing equipment comprises providing for communication of diagnostic testing equipment with the virtual clinic and at least one physician.
30. The method of claim 25, wherein the virtual clinic has a presence on at least one Internet site.
31. The method of claim 25, wherein the virtual clinic is further provided the capability for at least one insurance company referring patients to the virtual clinic.

32. The method of claim 25, wherein the virtual clinic is further provided the capability for at least one hospital referring patients to the virtual clinic.

33. The method of claim 25, wherein the virtual clinic is further provided the capability for informing a physician of diagnostic testing equipment accessible to a patient.

34. The method of claim 25, wherein the virtual clinic is further provided the capability for allowing a physician to access and update a patient's medical records.

35. The method of claim 25, further comprising:
contracting with at least one patient to provide payment in return for receiving medical services.

36. A method for developing a virtual clinic for allowing a patient to remotely contact a physician and receive medical services, comprising:

establishing a virtual clinic;

contracting with at least one physician to provide medical services to patients;

contracting with at least one insurance company to reimburse the virtual clinic for medical services provided to at least one patient; and

contracting with at least one patient to provide payment in return for receiving medical services.

37. The method of claim 36, further comprising:
contracting with at least one hospital to provide medical services to patients.
38. The method of claim 36, further comprising:
contracting with at least one hospital to provide diagnostic testing to the virtual clinic.
39. The method of claim 36, wherein the virtual clinic has a presence on at least one Internet site.
40. A method for a patient to remotely contact a physician and to receive medical services, comprising:
the patient contacting a virtual clinic;
the patient providing information on his medical condition;
the virtual clinic identifying a physician based on the patient-provided medical condition information;
the patient corresponding with the physician;
the patient submitting diagnostic testing to the physician; and
the physician informing the patient of the treatment.
41. The method of claim 40, further comprising:
at least one insurance company referring at least one patient to the virtual clinic.

42. The method of claim 40, further comprising:
at least one hospital referring at least one patient to the virtual clinic.
43. The method of claim 40, further comprising:
the virtual clinic receiving payment for medical services provided.
44. The method of claim 43, further comprising:
the virtual clinic forwarding a portion of the received payment to at least one physician.
45. The method of claim 40, further comprising:
informing the physician of diagnostic testing equipment available to the patient.
46. The method of claim 40, further comprising:
at least one physician providing information relating to medical licenses and the virtual clinic comparing a patient's residence with a physician's medical license.
47. The method of claim 40, wherein the step of identifying a physician based on the patient-provided medical condition information comprises physicians providing information relating to qualifications and the virtual clinic comparing the patient-provided medical condition information with the physician-provided information relating to qualifications.

48. The method of claim 40, further comprising:

the patient contracting with the virtual clinic to provide payment in return for receiving medical services.

49. The method of claim 40, further comprising:

at least one insurance company reimbursing the virtual clinic for medical services provided to at least one patient.

50. The method of claim 40, further comprising:

at least one physician reimbursing the virtual clinic for directing the patient to the physician.

51. A system for monitoring a medical condition of a patient:

a virtual clinic, the virtual clinic having communication circuitry, the communication circuitry constructed and arranged to enable the patient to upload diagnostic information;

a database operative with the virtual clinic, the database being constructed and arranged to store pre-set values relating to a medical condition;

comparison circuitry, the comparison circuitry constructed and arranged to retrieve the pre-set values from the database and compare them to the uploaded diagnostic information so that if the values of the uploaded diagnostic information exceed

on or more of the pre-set values from the database, then a signal can be issued from the virtual clinic to a medical provider.

52. The system as in claim 51 wherein the signal is sent to the patient's physician.

53. The system as in claim 51 wherein the signal is sent to an on-call physician.

54. The system as in claim 51, wherein the signal is sent to a medical service provider.

55. The system as in claim 51, wherein the pre-set value is set by the patient's physician.

56. The system as in claim 51, wherein the pre-set value is a generally accepted value.

57. The system as in claim 51, wherein the pre-set value is a past value of the patient.